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PRESS RELEASE

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SOMALI PLEADS GUILTY TO CONSPIRACY TO COMMIT PIRACY IN TAKEOVER OF MERCHANT SHIP - He and Other Pirates Held Vessel for 71 Days -

WASHINGTON - Jama Idle Ibrahim, a/k/a Jaamac Ciidle, pled guilty today to conspiracy to commit piracy under the law of nations and conspiracy to use a firearm during and in relation to a crime of violence, U.S. Attorney Ronald C. Machen Jr. and Shawn Henry, Assistant Director in Charge of the FBI's Washington Field Office, announced. The charges stem from a violent act of piracy in the Gulf of Aden against a merchant vessel, the *MV/CEC Future*, that began in November 2008.

Ibrahim, 38, of Somalia, entered the guilty plea this morning before the Honorable Magistrate Judge Deborah A. Robinson in the United States District Court for the District of Columbia. He faces a maximum penalty of five years in prison for the piracy conspiracy count and 20 years for the firearm conspiracy count. According to the plea agreement, the parties agree that a 25-year sentence is appropriate. No date was set for the sentencing, which will occur before the Honorable Paul L. Friedman.

This represents the first plea for a piracy related offense in the District of Columbia.

The act of piracy against the *MV/CEC Future* began on or about Nov. 7, 2008. According to a statement of facts presented to the court, Ibrahim and other Somalis were armed with AK 47s, rocket-propelled grenades and handguns when they seized the Danish-owned vessel, which contained cargo belonging to a Texas-based company, McDermott International, Inc. They held the vessel, cargo and crew members for ransom and forced the crew to anchor in waters off the Somalia coast. During the takeover, additional pirates and their associates boarded the vessel, and the pirates threatened the crew and controlled their movements with their weapons. The pirates stole money, food and supplies from the ship.

The vessel's owners paid a sum of money for the release of the ship and its crew on Jan. 14, 2009, and the last Somali pirate left the ship on Jan. 16, 2009 – 71 days after the vessel and crew

were seized.

“Violent acts of piracy on the high seas disrupt international trade and put human life at risk,” said U.S. Attorney Machen. “These charges should serve as an unmistakable warning to others thinking of launching pirate attacks. Crimes on open waters in faraway oceans will be punished in an American courtroom.”

“Today’s guilty plea demonstrates the FBI’s commitment, with our partners, to protect U.S. trade interests overseas and bring to justice those who wish to harm our companies transacting business via international waters,” said Assistant Director Henry.

The defendant also pled guilty, on Aug. 27, 2010, in the Eastern District of Virginia to charges stemming from another crime on the high seas. In that case, he pled guilty to attacking to plunder a vessel, engaging in an act of violence against persons on a vessel, and using a firearm during a crime of violence. The charges stemmed from an April 10, 2010 incident in which Ibrahim and five other Somalis fired upon the USS Ashland, a United States Navy vessel, in the mistaken belief that it was a merchant ship.

In announcing the guilty plea, U.S. Attorney Machen and Assistant Director Henry praised the work of the FBI’s Washington Field Office and the Joint Terrorism Task Force. The prosecution in the District of Columbia is being handled by Assistant U.S. Attorney Brenda J. Johnson from the U.S. Attorney’s Office, National Security Section, and Trial Attorney Jennifer E. Levy from the Counterterrorism Section of the Department of Justice’s National Security Division.

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